

Public Health & Environmental Health Collaboration

Advisory Board of Health
September 22, 2015

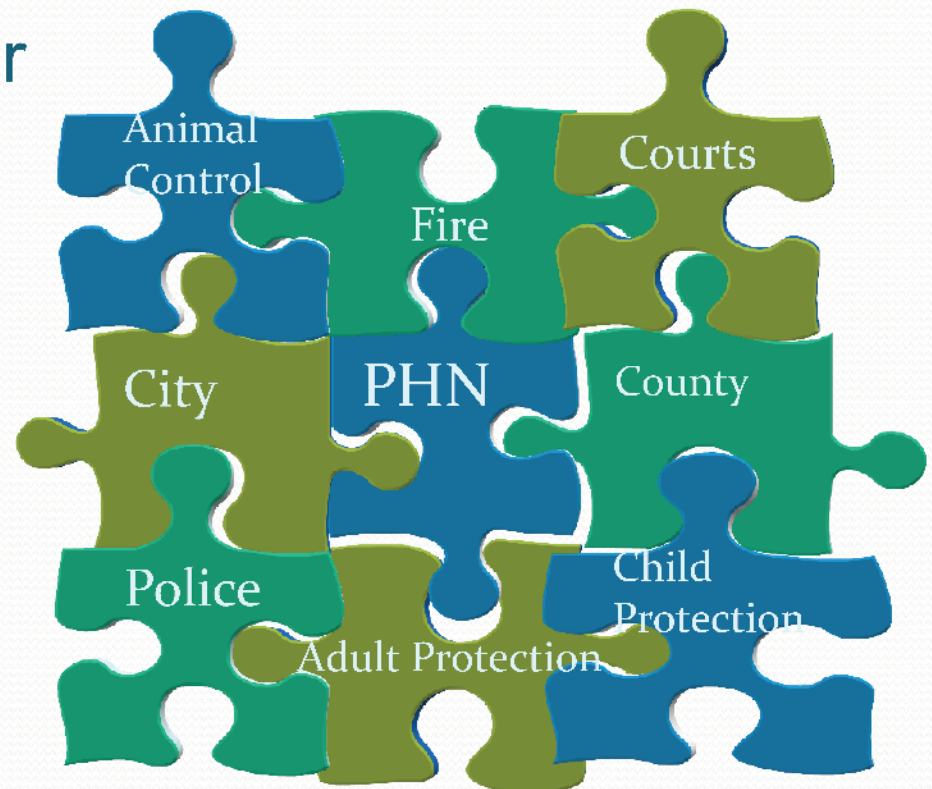
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Definition of a PHN

- MN Statutes, Chapter 145A states it is the “*act or failure to act*” that affects the public’s health.
- Only a board of health can determine and order abatement of a PHN
- Must be abated within 10 days

Overview

- Multi-disciplinary investigation
- All must work together



Collaboration - The Process

- Complaint is received from
 - Police or fire report referrals
 - Social workers or adult protection
 - Neighbors
- Make a scheduled visit
 - Ideal - make an appointment
 - Otherwise - make contact at the door
- If entry into home is denied, proceed to the next step



Process (cont.)

- Get search warrant
 - Draft from form
 - City Attorney Office review
 - Police apply to 4th District Court Judge
- Police serve search warrant
 - Bring all necessary staff (public health, child/adult protection, building inspection staff, etc.)

Process (cont.)

- While in home
 - Document everything with good photos
 - Check to ensure plumbing is functioning & have utilities (heat, electricity, water, etc.)
 - Check for accumulating organic matter (i.e., rotting food, human or animal feces)
 - Check for egress (a minimum of 36 inches to all doors and windows)
 - Check for insect and rodent infestation
 - Check for working smoke detectors

Process (cont.)

- Is home habitable?
 - If not, post condemnation notice
 - If habitable – orders may still be required
- EH delivers orders to the home owner
 - Describe what needs to be done
 - Including why & when
- Public Health and Human Services assist in:
 - Finding shelter for the person
 - Find out if the homeowner is capable of completing the abatement
 - Do they have someone who can help - friends, family, church groups, etc.

Process (cont.)

- Public Health & EH follow-up after 10 days
- If the property is in compliance:
 - EH closes the case
 - Public Health often continues
- If the property is not in compliance and a cleanup by the city's contractor is necessary:
 - Monitor process daily
 - Track staff hours and other expenses, document progress, etc., to compare against contractor's invoice
 - Requires a six month follow-up

Case Study #1

- Property on Emerson Ave. S., - homeowner, Liz
- Hennepin County contacted Public Health after they had been contacted by a concerned worker at Oxborough Clinic in 2011
- Public Health had contact with Liz every year after
- Hennepin County assigned someone to work with her
- In 2014 Liz is getting more confused and neighbors become concerned when she takes a neighbors pet for a few days

Case Study #1 (cont.)

- In May, 2014 EH conducts an inspection and finds from 3" to 1' of bird seed covering the back deck resulting in orders being issued to Liz to discontinue ground feeding.
- Public Health (PH) and EH decide a combined inspection is the appropriate plan after finding out how agitated she becomes after EH visits
- Public Health finds out Liz is spending \$500 on bird seed every month while other bills cannot be paid

Case Study #1 (cont.)

- PH encouraging Liz to go to doctor for serious health concerns & alert her rep-payee - \$500/month for bird seed
- Over the next few months PH & EH make a few co-visits to encourage Liz to discontinue the excessive ground feeding and to not allow the animals to come into her home (i.e., squirrels)
- PH works with Adult Protection to get in contact with a cousin who becomes the power of attorney
- On November 28, 2014 the cousin moves Liz to an assisted living & prepares the home for sale





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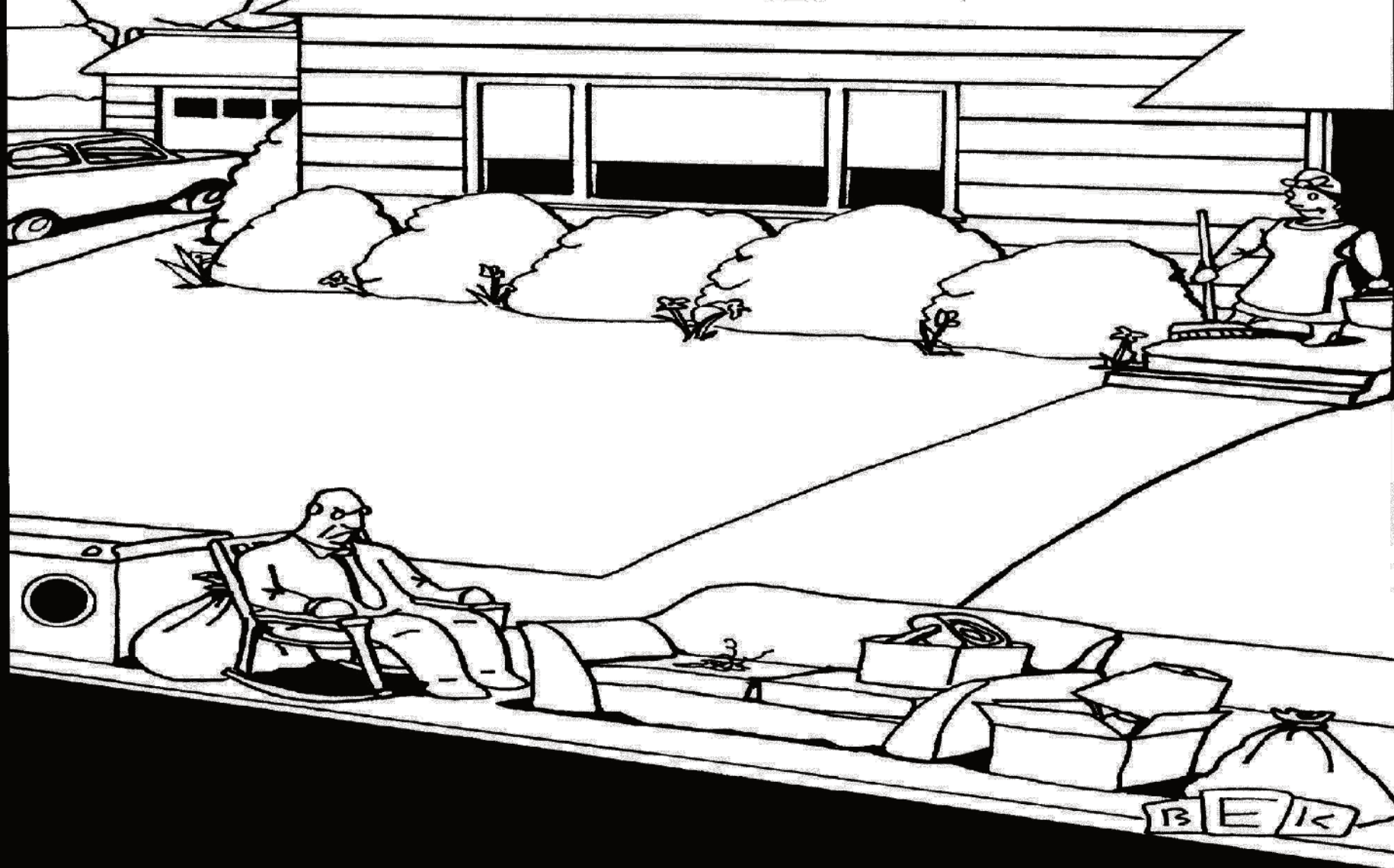
Case Study #2

- Property on Nicollet Ave. S.
- Police respond to welfare check request
 - Sugar hired a plumber but became angry when he did not bring a flashlight
- Several crisis calls for her
- 2006 EH condemned property as public health nuisance

Case Study #2 (cont.)

- EH inspects home with police
 - Issues orders for plumbing, lack of egress, mouse infestation, lack of cleaning and no working smoke detectors
- EH & PH make a co-visit with Sugar
 - She appears to be making progress and is receptive to discussions about resources
- PH continues to meet with her over two months
- Final EH & PH visit - the house is in compliance with all orders

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Lessons Learned

- PHNs are complex to resolve and may reoccur
- Discussions and brainstorming about resources is important
- Building relationships with Public Health, police officers, Human Services and others is crucial
- Try to keep your personal feelings from clouding your judgment
- Stick to the facts that you can document
- And did I mention - document, document, document (notes, police reports, photos, videos, etc.)